

POINT 3

THE TOC H MAGAZINE

JUNE 1999



TOC H

Bringing people together

AFTER THE BOMB, LIFE GOES ON

One year into the 'Families Under Pressure' project in East London, staff member Trudie Charles reports...

Community life here at the Toc H Family Centre in the Ensign Youth Club is the best antidote to recent tragic events. Here our members, whatever their background or culture, feel welcomed and safe to join in the variety of activities we now offer. Our new location, close to a housing estate and opposite two primary schools, brings Toc H to a wider audience. The signs outside the building, together with the fun, friendship and enrichment experienced inside, are clear indicators that the Toc H light is shining brightly. We offer a daily programme which keeps the team of three workers and four volunteers busy and involved.

A typical week

Mary runs a Parent and Toddler group on Monday, which is also popular with a number of super grandmothers. Our Muslim women are beginning to feel at home and enjoy Tuesday's Islamic Study session with Appi; these are attended by Bengali, Indian, Pakistani and Somali sisters, so we are looking for an English-speaking Islamic tutor to run an additional group. The 'healthy' lunch, which I cook with members, promotes vegetables and pulses instead of too much meat and is enjoyed by all, although it seems a slow process to persuade Bengali women to eat more vegetables and fruit to prevent some ailments. The advice session in the afternoon highlights the necessity of our English sessions on Thursday so that the women can cope with form-filling for benefits, and bills. Sabine runs craft sessions on Wednesday, where members explore their creative talents and learn new skills. We will be selling

some of our products at our Summer Fair in July. Thursday's English classes are sometimes enhanced by active learning through craft and massage. At popular request, a second massage-training course starts shortly. Thursday is also branch night at nearby EC and Tower Hill, where our diverse group of volunteers and staff end a long but fulfilling day. Finally, on Friday, there is another Parent and Toddler session and, from June, our 'Fat Chance' Health Club will offer an exercise class with healthy-living guidance. At the members' request we are also running a Monday-night cookery class!

Away from the East End

As most of our programmes run during term time, holidays are used for day trips and residential stays. Lindridge House is our second home and loved by all. A culturally mixed group will be there at Whitsun and two more in August, one for Bengali families and one for the Parent and Toddler group. One trip, which will have special meaning this year, is to Talbot House in July. Vicky, our long-term volunteer, was initiated in the Upper Room last December, and this time we return with four new volunteers and Tower Hill Branch members. I feel that Mike Lyddiard, whose guidance and support the project sadly misses, will be with us in spirit. I feel certain that, after the gains and losses, joys and tears, of our first year, we are achieving our aims in a true Toc H spirit, signified by the Four Points of the Compass.



Members visiting Buckfast Abbey during a Lindridge holiday.

Toc H

Toc H is about people. Founded in 1915, Toc H works to break down barriers between people by challenging their prejudices about others and the divisions which exist in society. Its work is based on Christian principles, and people of all faiths, and of none, are welcomed.

Toc H works with people from all walks of life, tackling social problems, such as loneliness and deprivation, through an approach which emphasises self-help, and encourages people to accept responsibility for themselves and their local community.

Toc H uses the model of the compass to offer four personal challenges which are the inspiration for its members.

These 'Four Points of the Compass' are set out on page 2.

Our Vision is of a Movement
'Building better communities by reaching out to all in friendship and service, confronting prejudice, and practising Christian values'.

Toc H is a registered charity No 211042.

IN THIS ISSUE:

A Chairman's perspective.

Help for Kosovo.

News from Bedford and Brixworth.

STAFF NEWS:

Ken Salt retired from the staff at the end of March after many years running Friendship Circles in Birmingham. We wish him well.

Shamsun Shireen has left the Toc H 'Families under Pressure' project in East London. We wish her well and hope to replace her shortly.

Nikki Mackenzie, who ran the 'print room' at Central Services for some years (and latterly worked for the Wendover Community Press there) is leaving...and will be much missed. Michael Tomlinson, while remaining part-time Despatch officer for Toc H, is also taking over Nikki's role with the Community Press, so the printing and copying service remains open as before.

The Rev Nick Fawcett leaves us at the end of June. On page 7 there is a review of Nick's latest book, and on page 4 a farewell article by Nick himself entitled 'A Continuing Journey'. We wish Nick well.

The Four Points of the Compass are:

1. Friendship - 'To Love Widely' - to welcome all in friendship,
2. Service - 'To Build Bravely' - to give personal service.
3. Fairmindedness - 'To Think Fairly' - to listen always to the views of others and to find one's own convictions.
4. The Kingdom of God - 'To Witness Humbly' - to acknowledge the spiritual nature of man, to practise the Christian way of life, and to help the truth to prevail.

Point 3 is the magazine of Toc H. It takes its name from the 3rd Point of the Toc H Compass, 'Fairmindedness'. It seeks to inform, to encourage and to stimulate.

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Next copy deadline: 9th July 1999

A full copy of the current editorial policy is available on request from the Editor.

The opinions expressed are those of the individual concerned and not necessarily the views of the Editor or of Toc H.

While Point 3 is made available to all members free of charge, voluntary contributions are welcome.

The Editors reserve the right to cut or précis articles and letters submitted unless the writer specifically stipulates otherwise.

Printed on chlorine-free,
environmentally friendly paper.

BEDFORD

Last summer a new group was launched in Bedford. At the beginning the aim was to start another 'Sole Survivors' group, but from the early stages those involved were clear that they wished the group to be open to all, not just 'sole survivors', and that the emphasis was to be on social activities rather than skill-learning. Joan Shankland, one of three existing members who are now in the group, writes to give us an update...

It gives me great pleasure to introduce ourselves in this issue of Point 3. We are a new group formed in July 1998 in Bedford. We call ourselves the Bedford Toc H Plus+ Group and we meet fortnightly at the RAFFA Club. Our aims are to promote a friendship and support group and to encourage the participation of all members in the organisation of our meeting and social events.

At the moment our group is usually about 12-15 members each meeting. We hope to increase this now that we have permanent premises. We have a Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer, and every three months we select two members to arrange the forthcoming programmes. I am glad to say this is done with much enthusiasm and we have enjoyed speakers, film shows, games evenings or just a social supper.

We also arrange events outside meeting nights, and these have included going to the horse-races, walking, lunches, bowling, theatre trips and the cinema. In June we are taking a boat-trip on the Thames. We are also hoping to arrange a weekend break.

If anyone would like to visit us one evening you are assured of a warm welcome. For details, contact our Chairperson, Marlene Baker, on 01234 340506.

Toc H helps Kosovo

The Wendover Toc H shop has raised over £1000 to help Kosovo refugees.

They decided they would match, £1 for £1, all profit (and donations) for a week. In their best week ever, over £534 was taken,

so a cheque for twice that amount was sent to the Salvation Army Appeal. 'Everybody seemed to rally round,' John Kilburn told the local paper. In view of the success, the donation jar stayed for another week.



The photograph shows Angela Gregory (Central Services and Chiltern Hills Branch) with Dr Lydia Christopher who was visiting from Toc H India.

Welcome to our New Members

Edwin Hicken, Paul Massey - Ashby de la Zouch
John Headon, Eunice Moore - Bideford
Mrs M A Naylor, Jeffrey Jarvis - Melton Mowbray

Kathleen Hammett - Newport
Agnes Phillips - Somerton

Guest Members

Muriel Aisthorpe, Wendy Eadon, Sheila Hardy,
Rebecca Hubbard, Gill Hudson, Andrew Jones, Brenda Marchant, Mary Parnell,
Julla Pentelow, Zoe Potter, Alice Risley,
Janet Sargent, Richard Taylor - ME Region
Kevin Lowey, John MacKenzie,
Colin Tregellas - NE Region
Alex Duggan, Jenni Mellor - NW/NW Region

David Berquin, Carlos Berten, Judi Drummond,
Weronika Konalska, Colin Moore,
Kathleen Moore, Geoffrey Young - SE Region
Hillary Hallett, Rita Hills, Christine Hodgson - SW Region
Derek Adams, Tracey Bean, Pauline Bradbury,
Maggie Bradley, Harry Isles, Karen Morgan - WM/SW Region

Welcome to 42 New Members

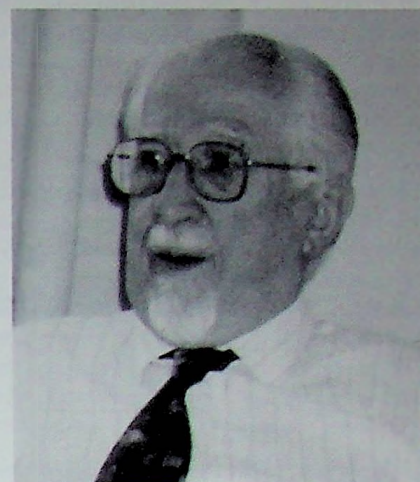
A CHAIRMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

Peter Ellis was elected Chairman of the Central Executive Committee in November.

A member for over 40 years who has held many offices in the SE Region, Peter has also been a key person in the new Rickmansworth Activity Centre. Outside the region, however, Peter is little known, so we felt Point 3 should introduce him more widely, through an interview with the Editor.

Peter, born in 1922 in Plymouth (and he keeps his Devon accent), served

during the War in the Royal Marines. He stayed on in Plymouth to nurse his mother, who died of multiple sclerosis in 1959. After a brief period on the Toc H staff in Germany, he moved to London where, after a short spell with the Abbey Community Centre in Westminster, he became administrator for the Family Service Unit in Tower Hamlets - an association with East London that has lasted ever since. He retired in 1987 but remains active with a number of voluntary organisations there.



JM: Knowing East London well, you must have been shocked by the Brick Lane bomb. Do you think race relations in that area are better or worse than when you went there?

PE: The situation is, of course, very different from when I first went there because, from being a new community welcomed by Toc H through Peter East and colleagues, the Asian community is now the dominant community in the area. Young Asians tend to hang together and support each other, which happens with any minority group. There are still pockets of racism, but overall I think the local communities support one another, and the response to the Brick Lane bombing was an example of this, as witnessed in the media.

JM: What keeps you in Toc H today?

PE: Its ethos and philosophy of breaking down barriers and serving the community in which one lives or works. We have to recognise today that there are now two aspects of Toc H. On the one hand the traditional side - branches, projects - where groups of people come together in friendship and take on tasks locally. On the other hand, with a falling membership, there is the opportunity to develop the Toc H philosophy through special pieces of work like Friendship Circles and Families under Pressure, supported by external funders.

JM: What do you hope Toc H will look like in 2009?

PE: Toc H is not unique in that today very few people 'join' groups in the way they used to. People today come together and do things together but don't enter into long-term commitments by becoming members. Some do and we have been blessed through those who have become more dedicated and serve the Movement in various ways. This is vital to the ongoing development of the Movement in its fellowship and service to the community through new specialised projects supported by external funders.

JM: So what do we have to do to achieve that?

PE: We have to look hard at our present structure and shape it well with the available resources of people, property and finance.

JM: As Chairman of CEC, you must have felt Mike's death more keenly than most. Which of Mike's contributions do you feel we miss most?

PE: As Chairman I was able to get to know and appreciate the man, and I was tremendously saddened by his death. We already miss his skill in supporting and developing staff - there's a big gap there for the staff in particular. We will also miss his enthusiasm and faith in Toc H - which was illustrated at the last Central

Council when he said: 'Contrary to the expectations of some, but thankfully in accordance with the great desire of many, Toc H - a movement that over the years has given substance to so many people's lives - is still full of life. We are here and, through the powerful combination of God's will and our effort, we are here to stay.'

JM: Tubby Clayton has been dead 25 years, and lived in a very different society. Do you think he still has things to say to Toc H?

PE: Oh yes. Tubby was always looking wider than Toc H. He wrote: 'Toc H began as a small high-powered movement; it did not bother much with membership. There was no membership at Talbot House - the members were the worshippers who worked among the constant stream of strangers. They were an inner core of friends who went up higher in the house, were there turned or transfigured, and received gifts for men who had not yet found a higher level than that of need or comfort'... and later he said: 'The true test of a movement is its influence on those outside it.' That's true today. We have to be open to work in the community alongside other people and organisations - and with other people's money - without expecting them to 'join'. It is about seeing others first as potential partners and allies, not just as potential members of Toc H.

'A CONTINUING JOURNEY'

Since joining the staff in November 1996, I have driven well over 60,000 miles; far enough, in other words, to have comfortably circumnavigated the globe. It's a lot of driving, isn't it, yet the impression it gives is misleading, because the majority of miles has been up and down the same roads; along the M5 towards Birmingham or the M4 heading for Wendover. Many hours travelling, undeniably, but much of the time the route all too familiar.

As I come to the end of my relatively short time with Toc H, I find echoes between those innumerable journeys and the situation in which we find ourselves as a Movement. Much effort and energy has been expended by staff and members alike over recent years in an attempt to steer us to a new direction. Yet despite repeated hopes that we may at last have turned the corner, the scenario currently facing us seems depressingly familiar. Yet more change and further stringent cutbacks appear inevitable. Not surprisingly, members are asking, 'Haven't we been here before?'.

So what's gone wrong? All of us will have our own theories but, as our late Director Mike Lyddiard reminded us in his 1997 address to Central Council, we should not be too hard on ourselves, for there are many who face similar problems. The fact is that society has changed beyond recognition over the last half century, even during the last ten or so years, and the result has been to cut the ground from under our feet. A book I have been reading recently makes the point well... 'virtually all voluntary associations have been finding it difficult in the last few decades to attract and retain members... 'Belonging' has been simultaneously losing its popularity in religion and in other fields as well' (quoted in *Religion in Britain since 1945*. G Davie).

So where does that leave us? Is it the end of the road? I earnestly hope not, for I am as convinced today as when I first joined the staff, that Toc H has something of immense

value to offer. What struck me from the start was the emphasis on life and faith being part of a continuing journey of discovery; a journey which all, irrespective of creed or conviction, are invited to share in. Potentially here is one of the great strengths of our Movement, setting us apart as almost unique in our aims and ethos. But are we true to that ideal? I feel sometimes we have turned Toc H into a destination rather than a journey. The openness we proclaim is often more apparent than real, and genuine reflection on 'eternal realities' (whatever we mean by that) is typically added into most programmes as an afterthought, if at all. The polarisation between Christians and agnostics/atheists is but one symptom of this malaise.

Toc H can survive and, what is more important, go forward, but to do so it needs to rediscover its reason for being. At present, despite attempts to focus staff work more clearly, we have no clear identity as a Movement. The result is that 99.9% of the general public have no idea what we stand for. We urgently need to decide who we are, what we are aiming for and why. Instead of chasing money and accommodating our work round it, we need to focus on the essentials which inspired the Movement's inception; breaking down barriers and overcoming prejudice.

The last three years have not been an easy time to travel with Toc H, but I will always be grateful to have shared, albeit briefly, in its journey. I leave, not because of the present state of the Movement, but because opportunities have arisen which I feel I have to take. They involve a change of direction and no small amount of risk, but they also offer a potentially fulfilling and rewarding future. The opportunity is there equally for Toc H, if it has the faith and courage to grasp it.

Nick Fawcett,
Chaplain/Development Officer: Div 2.

CANAL CLEARING IN KIRKINTILLOCH

Andrea Fairhurst reports on a weekend project, last April clearing the Forth and Clyde Canal at Kirkintilloch, near Glasgow.

'I'd always thought that the link between shopping trolleys and canals was a myth - I was wrong! During our weekend we managed to haul out over 20 trolleys, umpteen tyres, several car seats, two wheelbarrows,

a pram, a wheelie-bin and an armchair... amongst many other things. We also cleared a good deal of litter from the slipway and canal banks.

Members of British Waterways and the local canal society also lent a hand, and someone even brought a JCB! Local people stopped to chat - I think they were astonished by the pile of sunken 'treasure' we had discovered.

Our accommodation was fantastic. British Waterways kindly lent us the use of an extremely comfortable boat called the Nolly Barge. It even came



equipped with a Skipper and First Mate who kept us entertained with hilarious tales of canal life. I thoroughly enjoyed this project and hope that Toc H and British Waterways will continue to work together.





Penny Weynburg (pictured with some of the young people who attended the project) reports on a new initiative in Bradford.

ACTIVITY PROJECT IN BRADFORD

'Toc H's ongoing work with the Bradford Council of Mosques took a new turn this Easter. After much work with the older men, we turned to the children. Together with people from the Council of Mosques, Toc H volunteers and staff organised three-and-a-half days of activities for local children.

'We had around 20 children each day, amounting to 50 overall. Each morning we stayed in the Centre,

making models, painting and playing games. Afternoon outings included ice skating, bowling and a visit to Cartwright Hall.

'The lunches on the project were provided for us, children and volunteers, by the older men at the Council of Mosques. So, through the project, we not only met and worked with a wider part of the community, but also continued to build on our previous work'

A GARDEN TO EXCITE THE SENSES!

As a further development of the Brixworth 'Countryside Access for All' project, Councillor Trevor Atkins, Chairman of Northamptonshire County Council, and Toc H have joined forces to raise funds for an exciting and stimulating sensory garden accessible to all. Appeals have gone out to many local people and organisations. A sponsored walk took place recently around the Pitsford Water Perimeter. Toc H Volunteers have been working from the beginning on this garden.



The photograph shows the presentation of a £1000 cheque to Toc H member Mrs Joyce Bailey (Higham Ferrers Branch) from the C.W.S. Community Dividend Award scheme. This is towards the Tactile Activity Feature.

A concert was arranged with Northampton Light Orchestra and soloist Rachel Butler in March and raised £240 for the garden.

IN BRIEF • IN BRIEF • IN BRIEF

ANN TURNER, CHAIRMAN OF PENN BRANCH, with some of the Teddies she has knitted, before their departure to Zimbabwe where Toc H will pass them on to ill children.



Photograph courtesy of 'The Express & Star'

For the third year running, the Toc H float in the **POPERINGE CARNIVAL** won a prize - this year it was first prize. The theme was Toc H TeleTubbies - to the delight of many local children. There was also a Toc H drawing competition which was very successful, with 125 entries.

ELMSTEAD JOINT BRANCH, IN THE HAYWAIN DISTRICT, report an exciting and enjoyable meeting in March. Pat Barter was invited to attend and to initiate four of the Branch's five new members. Joan Curtis, Nettie Etheridge, and Dick and Betty Turner were duly initiated that night, but Maureen Morling was unable to be present.

The branch remains very active in the community. In addition to various other jobs, members and friends have been knitting and crocheting. This has produced 29 blankets and 92 other items which have been gratefully received by local organisations or Oxfam

THE PENMAENRHOS TOC H SCOUT GROUP has become the first in the locality to admit girls as well as boys. The photograph shows the Mayor and Mayoress of Conwy visiting the group on the night 15 children became Scouts.

A number of them have been cubs in the Toc H cub group that has been running for two years. These developments were largely due to the efforts of former Development Officer Cliff Newman. (photograph: Adrian Parsons Photography)



Harry Graham, Mid Eastern Regional Chairman, presenting first prize in an Easter Bonnet Competition to Rhoda Turnock, of **HIGHAM FERRERS WOMEN'S BRANCH**.



Thank you all

How can I ever begin to thank all of you who have given me such wonderful support during this dreadful time. Your prayers, thoughts, flowers, cards, letters, phone calls and the love you have shown to me and my family is wonderful. To find that so many people felt so much for Michael has been marvellous. To all of you who were able to attend his funeral, thank you. You really made it a true celebration of his life as I hoped it would be. It has helped me to have the strength to cope with all we find we have to do at a time like this.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff for their support, but in particular those at Central Services in Wendover. Without them at times I don't know how I would have managed. A particular word needs to go to Margaret Winstanley, who, supported by John Matthews, had the awful task of breaking the news to me. She has been a real pillar of strength ever since, as I know she always was to Michael.

Once again, from the bottom of my heart, thank you.

Ruth Lyddiard
Dunstable

Tribute from Bangladesh

We woefully condole the sad death of our brother Mike Lyddiard. May God rest his soul in peace. May God grant the members of the bereaved family the capability to have patience in these days of such an undesirable and unbearable pity incident of sudden death of our near and dear friend. We are worried. We share the sorrows. Although we do not desire to leave this beautiful world, we are to go, we are to leave, we are undone. We are victim to this sad departure leaving saddest thoughts, memories and love for our coming generations.

We the members of the executive committee sat together in a condolence meeting in the night of April 13 and every member had something to say about the sudden death. The committee passed a resolution of deep condolence on the death of Mr Mike.

Mr Kabir Ahmed
President, Khasdobir Youth Action Group
Sylhet, Bangladesh

Looking to the future

I have been speaking to a number of people in Poperinge who had a talk with Mike Lyddiard just before he died and they all told me that it was Mike's biggest wish that Toc H would get back on its feet again. After the funeral, however, some people expressed the fear that this would mean the end of Toc H. I truly hope this is not going to happen. I think Mike would turn in his grave if he heard that. Do we really want all his work and energy to be for nothing? Please don't give up! There are so many good things going on and getting started for the moment, and I am still convinced that the Toc H values are very important and that there is a great job for Toc H still to be done.

The suggestion was made, shortly after Mike's death, that we should cancel our Carnival project. We decided not to, because we felt it would be Mike's wish that we should go on. And we won First Prize again! Isn't this the biggest tribute to Mike we could have made? And we have already got so many results from the project - two new Guest members from Belgium, several new British Guest members, a Wellingborough group will start again, we have already had more than 80 drawings back from the drawing competition, a handicraft weekend is to be organised in October, etc. etc. Wouldn't it be a shame to let this fade?

I realise that I have met most of my friends through Toc H. I got to speak English reasonably well and fluently through Toc H. I have met people I would never have spoken to and I have made friends I would never have had without Toc H - people with different points of view, different religions, different ages, different countries. I was part of exciting projects, doing things I thought I could never do.

An Kestler
Zwevegem, Belgium

Is Ray Goodway (Letters, April) thinking only of himself? Has the movement really touched him? It changed my life, became a part of me, altered my views, broadened my outlook, gave me world-wide friends (as far afield as Australia, Nigeria, Kenya). I tragically lost a daughter of 15 in 1959. Toc H members and staff were there to help and encourage. Now, my Toc H friends still help and encourage.

What about the new generation? Are they to be denied the experience of

Toc H? Don't they need help along the way? Toc H can still enrich people's lives, not in a big way but just by being there. You don't die with dignity when you kill yourself so let's stop talking about killing off Toc H. I've been a member for 51 years and I believe in it.

Margaret Sinnicks
Clacton-on-Sea

Thank you, Ray Goodway, for having the courage to advocate closing the Toc H movement with dignity, rather than letting it fade away. I am in full agreement. When Tubby Clayton launched Toc H all those years ago, there was a real need for a movement devoted to helping others. This is now not so. There are innumerable organisations covering this broad aspect, many enthusiastic and well-funded, so that the needs for which Toc H was founded are now met elsewhere. I have no knowledge of the position in the country generally, but in the South East new members are almost unheard of. I agree that, for practical purposes, the task of Toc H has now been completed and Ray Goodway's suggestion of winding up with a service of thanksgiving is to be commended.

V J Beauchamp
Seaford, Sussex.

Remembering the Elder Brethren

While I am all in favour of the new form of prayer for taking Light ("We are called to be instruments of God's will...") I have nonetheless become a little apprehensive lest preference for its use might lead to the gradual disuse of all mention of our Elder Brethren. I wrote to Mike Lyddiard, expressing my concern and suggesting that there might be some discussion on the matter. He replied sharing my concern and looking forward to the debate "that must come in our efforts to balance past, present and future".

This April, at our Gloucester District Rededication Service, I made a first attempt to "strike the balance" by very simply prefacing the new form with the words: "Mindful of the presence of our Elder Brethren, let us pray...". I offer this as an attempt to start the debate for which Mike hoped and look forward to more suggestions being put forward.

Padre Hugh Potts
Gloucester

NOTE: The printed version of the form of the Ceremony of Light based on words of St Francis is prefaced with the words: "The leader may say: 'Let us give thanks for the lives of (by name)'." Ed.

TRIBUTES

JACK TUNNADINE, of Walsall Branch, died in March aged 77. Despite failing health in latter years, he attended meetings regularly and actually took Light at the meeting immediately before his death. Fearless in argument, he was always prepared to defend a challenging point of view while, at the same time, retaining his dry good humour and steadfast friendship with all members. He held many offices at Branch level and also represented the branch at District. He will be sadly missed. **MB**

GLADYS LABORDE, of Paris Branch, died in March. A member for over 30 years, she was a great helper and had given a life of service as matron of the Victoria Home, which looks after elderly British men and women. She was awarded the MBE for this work. She will be sadly missed. **MH**

MARY CARMICHAEL, who died in January, joined Toc H in the early 1930s and faithfully served King's Norton & Northfield Branch until ill-health overtook her. She made an excellent Pilot, was generous to a fault, and her words of wisdom were much valued. Her warm nature and sense of humour are much missed. **JE**

MARY DYKES, who died in February aged 89, was Pilot of Rochdale branch for over 30 years. Her father helped to start Toc H in Rochdale in 1926, and Mary became involved in the '30s with the then 'League of Women Helpers'. She was a sympathetic friend to all. Talented at cooking, embroidery, photography and painting, and a worldwide traveller, she shared her experiences in a quiet and gentle manner. **RC**

FRANK EAST had been in membership for over 40 years (including time as a Central Councillor) in branches at Kingsbury (Middlesex) and Edgware and was then a hard-working member in Taunton for the five years before his death. He loved nothing better than coming on our weekly visits to the Nursing Home - and every patient always received a birthday card from him. We have lost a well-loved member at Taunton Branch. **BWH**

PHYLLIS PHILLIPS, who died in January, was a keen member in Barton-on-Humber, having previously been a member in Worthing and Shanklin. She exemplified the Four Points of the Compass in a wonderful life of Christian service. The many tributes show how many people appreciated her brightness and cheer, based on a deep love of the Saviour. **JP**

THOMAS HOLLAND, who died in March, was a long-serving member of Sprowston branch. You would find him playing bowls or a game of cards in winter with patients of St Andrews Hospital in Norwich, and he also generously supported the work of the branch. After its closure, Tom did much voluntary work with those who were blind. He will be greatly missed. **LL**

JOHN HOOPER, of Tetbury Branch, died in February. He spent most of the War as a prisoner-of-war in Germany and Poland and actually joined Toc H there. Though this imprisonment seriously damaged his health, he lived to be 81. He was insistent that 'Service is the rent we pay for our room on Earth', and will be sadly missed by members, family and friends. **PZ**

JOAN SPEAR, who died in March aged 77, was a stalwart member in Tyne and Wear for many years. As well as being a very committed member of her church, Mothers Union, and other church-related activities, she put great effort into Toc H. She was involved with local projects for children and, latterly, for pensioners. Local members and friends are sad to have lost her, but are glad she is now at peace. **MG**

OBITUARIES

In January

Mary Carmichael King's Norton & Northfield

In February

'Stan' Doorey Nailsea
Mary Dykes Rochdale
Frank East Taunton
John Hooper Tetbury

In March

Thomas Holland Norwich District
Joan Jeffrey Hythe
Gladys Laborde Paris
Audrey Redfern Ashby de la Zouch
Arthur Robinson Melton Mowbray
'John' Shelley Late Richmond
Joan Spear Tyne & Wear District
'Jack' Tunnadine Walsall

In April

William Todd Bognor Regis

Not previously recorded

Harry Cresswell Westwood
Cyril Honnor London District
Arthur Marks Burraton
William Strong Troon

BOOK REVIEW:

'Are you listening? - Honest prayers about life' by Nick Fawcett.

In the mid-60s, when I was in my late teens, a book by Michel Quoist called 'Prayers of Life' introduced me and many of my contemporaries to exciting 'new' insights into prayer:

- prayers could be written, and spoken, in everyday language rather than just formal or religious language
- prayer is something we could each of us do for ourselves, rather than something a minister did on our behalf
- prayer grows out of our experience and reflection on all the ordinary things in our daily lives rather than just the 'religious' bits
- prayer is real, and is about being real in a developing personal relationship with God
- prayer is about dialogue with God, rather than a monologue, or a 'shopping list' of needs, wants or oughts.
- prayer opens us to listening for the voice of God, often saying surprising things.

All of this was not in fact new, but has been central to the tradition of prayer throughout the 2000 years of Christianity. However, each generation needs to 'discover' this for itself, and be reminded of it.

Nick Fawcett's book is a useful addition to this genre. It contains 47 dialogues with God based on a wide range of experience, starting with the difficulty of knowing how to be our real selves when we pray, and ending with the risks we take when we ask God to speak with us.

Each meditation has:

- a short introductory reflection on experience
- a few well-chosen verses from the Bible
- a voicing of thought and feelings which arise from experience
- a comment from God
- a few more appropriate verses from the Bible

There were times when I was slightly anxious that I was going to be embarrassed by clichéd soul-searching and a paternalistic God (who always starts 'My child...'), but mostly I felt that the reflections on our 'human' experience were couched in the kind of language and metaphor we use when speaking; and 'God's' comments definitely address an adult child rather than a youngster. Indeed, there was a sense of encounter with a God who knows and accepts us as we are, loves us unconditionally, and encourages us to grow further, even if painfully, into the love and wisdom which is God's imprint in us.

'Are you listening?' is not only what we sometimes say to God when it seems there is no answer, but is also what God may often be saying to us. The book will not only provide another helpful set of scripts for people to voice their own prayers, but a doorway into a new or renewed encounter with God in the details of their own lives and times.

Sue Cumming.

'Are you listening? - Honest prayers about life' is published by Kevin Mayhew, ISBN No 1-84003-308-8. Cost £9.99p



NOTICE BOARD

TAKE A BREAK AT LINDRIDGE

'Lindridge is our second home and loved by all,' writes Trudie Charles on our front page.

You too can discover the joys of a stay there, in the beautiful Devon countryside close to Dartmoor. The seaside resorts of Torquay, Paignton, Brixham and Teignmouth are all close by. You can take trips out, or stay in to enjoy the extensive grounds. The grounds include a large pond area which is a haven for wildlife.

Self-catering accommodation is available for £100 per night per party - maximum 15 people. Ideal for a holiday, a retreat, a project or a training event.

For more details ring Mike Rowlands on 01626-365670 or E-mail lindridge@eclipse.co.uk

CENTRAL COUNCIL 1999

Weekend 5th-7th Nov.

Any member of Toc H is welcome to attend the Annual Meeting of the Central Council provided:

- a) there are enough places left when they apply and
- b) they are willing to pay their own costs.

The charge for the residential week-end is £60.50 per person for standard accommodation.

Anyone interested in attending should contact Angela Gregory at Toc H Central Services.

LEGAL LIABILITY FOR EVENTS

PLEASE NOTE: When any Event is being organised by Toc H, and includes an activity that involves a higher than normal risk to participants, our Insurers MUST be informed, via John Matthews or Janet Meacham at Central Services. This includes not only obvious activities such as parachuting, bungee jumping etc, but also less obvious activities such as those on water or those involving climbing, bouncy castles etc.

Central Services need to be told the date and location of the Event, numbers participating and their relationship to Toc H (guests, volunteers), safety procedures and relevant experience of those running it, together with details of any contracts signed with, for example, local authorities. If in doubt, contact Central Services. This procedure does not normally lead to any more insurance costs, but will safeguard our cover.

WANTED

There is an unknown number of young people between 8 and 16 who can now become young members of Toc H. WE ARE SEEKING someone who can relate to young people, and who would enjoy keeping and growing their interest in Toc H.

This honorary post would suit someone with his or her own word processor and a few hours to spare each month.

If you would like to know more, please contact John Dickson, daytime 0121-770 0333, evening 0121-430 2685

MATURE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Volunteers of 50 or over are needed to join the Glasgow project 'Our World - Our Times' from 1st-7th August. As part of the 'International Year for Older Persons; towards a society for all ages', a team of volunteers will work with both elderly and younger people in Glasgow who may experience social exclusion.

Details from Suzanne Dunwell; 01677 425152.

NORR RALLY

The NORR (North of the River Rally) will take place at Watford on Saturday 9th October 1999. All welcome!

Venue: The St Thomas Centre, Langley Road, Watford.

Time: 12-00 (Lunch at 12-30) to 5.00 p.m.

Cost: £5.

The main speaker will be Jean Whiteman. There will be Folk Dance entertainment (which all can join in if they wish!), and the closing Service will be led by the Rev Colin Rudd.

Tickets (and other details) from Chris Stoneham,

71 Colvin Gardens, Hainault, Essex, IG6 2LQ

E-mail: Stoneham@Stoneham.demon.co.uk

WORLD CHAIN OF LIGHT 1999 AND 2000...

The World Chain of Light will start this year in Scotland. That will be at 9.00 p.m. on 11th December, and a 24-hour vigil will be held in Scotland, probably in Edinburgh. Branches in the UK should observe the ceremony at 9.00 p.m. on the 11th. More details will be announced in the next issue.

Looking ahead to 2000, Toc H Australia have made the suggestion that we might, in 2000, experiment with a different format. It is recognised that 9.00 p.m. on 11th December is not the easiest time for UK branches to meet. It is also known that a number of branches already choose to observe the ceremony at times other than 9.00 p.m. on the 11th. Toc H Australia suggests that, in 2000, the World Chain of Light be abandoned and, instead, there should be an 'International Toc H Day' on the Sunday nearest the 11th December, with branches worldwide conducting the Ceremony of Light at noon, local time, on that Sunday. There would still be a main focus venue for messages etc.

As the idea of the World Chain of Light originated in Australia, it seems right that it is Toc H Australia suggesting the change. If you have any thoughts about this, please write at once - certainly by the end of June - to Ken Prideaux-Brune at Central Services. He will then discuss the responses with Ray Geise, chairman of Toc H Australia, when he visits the U.K. in July.

RICKMANSWORTH OPEN DAY

There has been a change of timing for this Open Day at the Rickmansworth Activity Centre. The date is 1st August. The new time is 2-6 p.m. and not as stated in Point 3 in April.

All welcome. For more details contact Chris Stoneham on 0181-270-5742 or E-mail: Stoneham@Stoneham.demon.co.uk